

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, August 4,  
1805, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve  
Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul  
Leicester Ford.**

**TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE J. MSS. (JAMES MADISON.)**

Monticello, Aug. 4, 05.

Dear Sir: —On my return from Bedford two days ago I received your favor of July 24 and learnt with sincere regret that Mrs. Madison's situation required her going to Philadelphia. I suppose the choice between Physic and Baynham was well weighed. I hope the result will be speedy & salutary, and that we shall see you in this quarter before the season passes over.

A letter from Charles Pinckney of May 22 informs me that Spain refuses to settle a limit, & perseveres in withholding the rectification of the convention. He says not a word of the *status quo*, from which I conclude it has not been proposed. I observe by the papers that Dalton is arrived with the public dispatches, from which we shall know the particulars. I think the *status quo*, if not already proposed, should be immediately offered through Bowdoin. Should it even be refused, the refusal to settle a limit is not of itself a sufficient cause of war, nor is the withholding a ratification worthy of such a redress. Yet these acts shew a purpose both in Spain & France against which we ought to provide before the conclusion of a peace. I think therefore we should take into consideration whether we ought not immediately to propose to England an eventual treaty of alliance, to come into force whenever (within years) a war shall take place with Spain or France. It may be

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proper for the ensuing Congress to make some preparations for such an event, and it should be in our power to shew we have done the same. This for your consideration.

Mr. Wagner writes me that two black convicts from Surinam are landed at Philadelphia. Being on the spot you will have a better opportunity of judging what should be done with them. To me

it seems best that we should send them to England with a proper representation against such a measure. If the transportation is not within any of the regular appropriations it will come properly on the contingent fund. If the law does not stand in the way of such an act, & you think as I do, it may be immediately carried into execution. Accept for Mrs. Madison & yourself my affectionate salutations & assurances of constant esteem & respect.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Three days later, he wrote to Madison:

“ Monticello, Aug. 7, 1805.

“ Dear Sir,—On a view of our affairs with Spain, presented me in a letter from C. Pinckney, I wrote you on the 23d of July, that I thought that we should offer them the *status quo*, but immediately propose provisional alliance with England. I have not yet received the whole correspondence. But the portion of the papers now enclosed to you, confirm me in the opinion of the expediency of a treaty with England, but make the offer of the *status quo* more doubtful. The correspondence will probably throw light on that question; from the papers already received I infer a confident reliance on the part of Spain on the omnipotence of Bonaparte, but a desire of procrastination till peace in Europe shall leave us without an ally. General Dearborn has seen all the papers. I will ask the favor of you to communicate them to Mr. Gallatin & Mr. Smith. From Mr. Gallatin I shall ask his first opinion, preparatory to the stating formal questions for our ultimate decision. I am in hopes you can make it convenient on your return to see & consult with Mr. Smith & Gen. Dearborn, unless the latter should be come on here where I can do it myself. On the

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receipt of your own ideas, Mr. Smith's and the other gentlemen, I shall be able to form points for our final consideration & determination.

“I enclose you some communications from the Mediterranean. They shew Barron's understanding in a very favorable view. When you shall have perused them, be so good as to enclose them to the Secretary of the Navy. Accept my fervent wishes for the speedy recovery of Mrs. Madison, and your speedy visit to this quarter.”